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Los Baños Birds

Probably the chief ambition of every California bird student is to see the California Condor. Then among bird students living in the San Francisco Bay Region the next ambition is to visit Los Baños, a thriving little town in the west central part of the San Joaquin Valley, near which are located extensive marshes abounding with bird life.

The trip to Los Baños can be made easily in four hours by automobile from either San Francisco or the East Bay Region, in either case going by San Jose and Gilroy, then east from Gilroy over the Pacheco Pass.

Very comfortable accommodations may be had in Los Baños at the Hotel Oberon, where the proprietors, Messrs. Triglia and Pedrone, are very congenial hosts.

Soon after entering the Pacheco Pass one's attention is drawn to Yellow-billed Magpies. Farther along White-throated Swifts are seen circling about a huge rock where they nest. As we proceed from here one or two Golden Eagles are occasionally seen overhead. In the level valley, beyond the Pass, close to Los Baños, Mockingbirds, Bullock Orioles and Western Kingbirds are seen, indicating that we are in the Lower Sonoran Zone.

We spend a comfortable night at the hotel, arise very early, have a substantial breakfast and are off to the marshes, which are on the south side of the highway three miles east of the town. Here we leave the highway and follow a side road, for about half a mile, which parallels an irrigation ditch. From this point we start on foot and follow the ditch as far as the small ponds, a distance of about two miles.

The first birds to attract our attention are Black and Forster Terns, as they fly over our heads and utter their sharp cries of "keet, keet," or "kit, kit." Blackbirds are abundant, and by the time our walk is ended we shall have seen Brewer, Red-winged, Tri-colored Red-wing, Yellow-headed Blackbirds and Cowbirds. Great Blue and Black-crowned Night Herons fly up at frequent intervals from the marsh. Anthony Green Herons are present along the banks of the ditch, and an occasional Bittern is flushed. American Egrets are noted here and there. If it is early spring or late summer a few Snowy Herons will be present, and if we are really fortunate we shall flush one or two Least Bittern from the clusters of tules.

White Pelicans soar leisurely overhead and flocks of White-faced Glossy Ibises suddenly appear in the sky, as if coming from nowhere, and settle down nearby. If our visit is made in late July or early August we shall see large flocks of American Egrets and White-faced Glossy Ibises feeding together.

After an hour or so we shall have become weary of listening to the Black-necked Stilts which have been scolding us almost from the beginning of our walk. Avocets are usually found here, too, but they are much less common in this area than the Stilts.

We find Traill Flycatchers, Yellow and Pileolated Warblers, Bullock Orioles, Western Kingbirds and an occasional Wood Pewee in the willows bordering the ditch. Here also we may even find a Barn Owl or a Great Horned Owl.

Tule Wrens and Yellow-throats are in the tules bordering the ponds, and on the ponds, if our visit is made in early April, are Mallard, Gadwall, Baldpate. Pintail, Green-winged Teal and Buffle-head Ducks. Fulvous Tree Ducks, Cinnamon Teal, Shovellers, Redhead and Ruddy Ducks are present throughout most of the year.

Semipalmated and Black-bellied Plovers, Wilson Snipe, Hudsonian Curlews, Greater Yellow-legs, Long-billed Dowitchers, Least, Western and Red-backed Sandpipers are present in early spring. Killdeer are always found here.

The Sparrow family is represented by Linnets, Willow Goldfinches, Savannah and Song Sparrows, with Gambel Sparrows in the spring. A Blue Grosbeak may be occasionally seen.

Among the Swallows, the Violet-green, Cliff, Barn and Tree have been noted. There is always a nesting colony of Barn Swallows, in the spring-time, under the concrete bridge where the highway crosses the ditch.

Turkey Vultures, Red-tailed, Marsh and Sparrow Hawks are usually observed. Cooper and Duck Hawks as well as Prairie Falcons have occasionally been seen. Ravens (presumably a pair), Glaucous-winged and California Gulls have been seen also.

The writer's experience has been that a visit to this locality in late July or early August is the most satisfactory. During the duck-shooting season visitors are not allowed in this area. If one visits the region in May or June it is well worth while to make a side trip to Gustine to see the American Egret rookery in the cottonwood trees alongside the highway about three miles south of the town.

The writer has noted the following species in this area from the town limits of Los Baños out along the highway to and including the marshes located as described above:

Eared Grebe	Desert Sparrow Hawk	Horned Lark
Western Grebe	Virginia Rail	Violet-green Swallow
Pied-billed Grebe	Coot	Tree Swallow
White Pelican	Semipalmated Plover	Barn Swallow
Farallon Cormorant	Killdeer	Cliff Swallow
California Heron	Black-bellied Plover	Raven
American Egret	Wilson Snipe	Marsh Wren
Snowy Egret	Hudsonian Curlew	Mockingbird
Anthony Green Heron	Greater Yellow-legs	Western Bluebird
Black-cr. Night Heron	Least Sandpiper	Western Gnatcatcher
American Bittern	Red-backed Sandpiper	Pipit
Western Least Bittern	Long-billed Dowitcher	Cedar Waxwing
White-faced Glossy Ibis	Western Sandpiper	Shrike
White-fronted Goose	Marbled Godwit	Yellow Warbler
Fulvous Tree Duck	Avocet	Audubon Warbler
Common Mallard	Black-necked Stilt	Yellow-throat
Gadwall	Northern Phalarope	Pileolated Warbler
Baldpate	Glaucous-winged Gull	English Sparrow
Pintail	California Gull	Meadowlark
Green-winged Teal	Forster Tern	Yellow-headed Blackbird
Cinnamon Teal	Caspian Tern	Red-winged Blackbird
Shoveller	Black Tern	Tricolored Blackbird
Redhead	Mourning Dove	Bullock Oriole
Buffle-head	Barn Owl	Brewer Blackbird
Ruddy Duck	Burrowing Owl	Cowbird
Turkey Vulture	Horned Owl	Blue Grosbeak
Cooper Hawk	Texas Nighthawk	House Finch
Red-tailed Hawk	Red-shafted Flicker	Willow Goldfinch
Golden Eagle	Western Kingbird	Savannah Sparrow
Marsh Hawk	Black Phoebe	Gambel Sparrow
Prairie Falcon	Trail Flycatcher	Song Sparrow
Duck Hawk	Western Wood Pewee	

Charles A. Bryant, San Francisco, California. August 5, 1933.

In addition to the list given above by Mr. Bryant, on July 19, 1930, a flock of fifteen Swainson Hawks was observed, apparently in migration, moving about in close formation over an open field and at intervals alighting on the ground together.

Another species is the Ring-necked Pheasant, seen May 29, 1933, at the edge of one of the levees very close to the water.—Editor.



Tennessee Cove, Marin County

August Field Trip was taken on Sunday, the 13th, to Tennessee Cove, Marin County, with twenty-one members and eight guests. The day was bright, with a brisk west wind and a high fog at the beach.

On our customary visit to the marsh near Manzanita, an unsuccessful search was made for Clapper Rail, which have been found there. Fresh tracks in the mud along the small sloughs indicated, however, that a few individuals are still present. On one of our former trips to this marsh a dead Black Rail was found, an incident which raised the hope that we might some day see a live one there; but ever since we have looked for it in vain.

While standing on the edge of the marsh and scanning the water in search of something that might be of interest, we discovered three Caspian Terns fishing. Hudsonian Curlews and a lone Spotted Sandpiper were feeding in the mud.

Among the land birds usually noted on this trip, Linnets have always been the most abundant, but this time Pine Siskins seemed to be everywhere; some were feeding on the open hillside, others were in the eucalyptus trees, while still others, in considerable numbers, were found in the small willow grove near the ocean. In this same grove we had excellent opportunities to watch several Gnatcatchers at very close range. Pileolated Warblers were found in larger numbers than on our former visits to this locality.

Last year our group had the pleasure of seeing a Northern Phalarope in the small pool near the beach; today a close relative was present, a Red Phalarope. This species and the Spotted Sandpiper are new records for the Audubon in this region. The Band-tailed Pigeons have been seen only once before, on June 11, 1922.

Since 1919 the Association has taken thirteen trips to this region, all in the months of June, July and August, recording ninety-eight species. For this trip a total of fifty-six species was noted, as follows:

Brown Pelican	Anna Hummingbird	Western Gnatcatcher
Farallon Cormorant	Allen Hummingbird	Yellow Warbler
Great Blue Heron	Kingfisher	Pileolated Warbler
Black-crowned Night	Red-shafted Flicker	English Sparrow
Heron	Downy Woodpecker	Red-winged Blackbird
Ruddy Duck	Black Phoebe	Brewer Blackbird
Turkey Vulture	Western Flycatcher	Purple Finch
Red-tailed Hawk	Cliff Swallow	Linnet
Sparrow Hawk	Steller Jay	Pine Siskin
California Quail	California Jay	Willow Goldfinch
Killdeer	Raven	Green-backed Goldfinch
Hudsonian Curlew	Western Crow	Spotted Towhee
Spotted Sandpiper	Chickadee	Brown Towhee
Red Phalarope	Plain Titmouse	Savannah Sparrow
Western Gull	Bush-tit	Lark Sparrow
California Gull	Wren-tit	Junco
Heermann Gull	Bewick Wren	Nuttall Sparrow
Caspian Tern	Russet-backed Thrush	Song Sparrow
Band-tailed Pigeon	Western Bluebird	
Barn Owl		

Chas. A. Bryant, Historian.

Audubon Notes

September Meeting: The regular meeting will be held on Thursday, the 14th, at 8 p. m., room 19, Ferry Building.

The speaker of the evening will be Mr. William H. Behle, Research Assistant of the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, University of California, whose subject will be "The Bird Life of the Great Salt Lake." The lecture will be illustrated.



September Field Trip will be taken on Sunday, the 17th, to the bay shore at Lincoln Park, Alameda. San Francisco members will take Southern Pacific Alameda Ferry at 10:45 a. m. and either north or south side trains to Lincoln Park Station. East Bay members may reach Lincoln Park by taking Alameda bus in Oakland at Fourteenth and Broadway, walking through the park to the station opposite the tennis courts. Bring luncheon. Chas. A. Bryant, leader.



August Meeting: The 192nd regular meeting was held on August 10th, in room 19, Ferry Building, with twenty-four members and guests present. President Chas. A. Bryant in the chair.

The following new member was elected: Miss Tillie A. Papina of San Francisco.

Field observations were reported as follows:

Elmer Aldrich: June 15, San Leandro, three Arizona Hooded Orioles.

Vincent Mowbray: August 7, East Oakland, Mockingbird.

Commander and Mrs. Parmenter: July 17, 175+ Long-billed Dowitchers,

100+ Marbled Godwits; August 9, 100+ White Pelicans, 130+ Black-bellied Plovers, 80+ Hudsonian Curlews, 1500+ Western Willets, 48+ Wilson Phalarope, Least and Western Sandpipers, Caspian Terns, and many thousands Northern Phalaropes, all seen at the Dumbarton and San Mateo Bridges; July 28, Cliff House, five Black Turnstones, two Wandering Tattlers, 31, two Surf Birds, one Ruddy Turnstone, sixteen Black Turnstones.

Carl Smith: July 23, Cliff House, twelve Sanderlings; 29, Land's End, three Surf Birds; August 6, Golden Gate Park, Northern Phalarope.

Mrs. A. B. Stephens: July 20, Lake Merced, Western Grebe with one young.

The evening was devoted to vacation experiences by members. Limited space here does not permit a full account of the many interesting items reported. Rather outstanding, however, were the following: Rock Wrens seen by Elmer Aldrich, June 22, in the snow at 11,000 feet on the north side of Mt. Clark, and the Pileated Woodpeckers in Yosemite Valley, July 2.

Paul Lehmann saw two Condors in Sespe Canyon, Ventura County, July 18th.

Miss Pettit spoke of the birds at Drakesbad in the Mt. Lassen region and more particularly of their singing early in the morning.

Mrs. Stephens reported having seen a female Wood Duck with seven young at the Means Ranch at Snelling, California, and also displayed a Bullock Oriole's nest from Kern County built entirely from straw-colored fibre of the Joshua tree.

Audubon Association of the Pacific

For the Study and the Protection of Birds

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Monthly meeting second Thursday, 8 P. M., Room 19, Ferry Building.

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